

REMARKS

Claims 16 and 17 remain in this application. Claims 1-15 have been withdrawn.
Claim 16 is herein amended.

Regarding the matter of indefiniteness in Paragraph 3 of the Official Letter, claim 16 has been amended in order to obviate the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112.

Claims 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Chen in view of Tsujimura.

Chen was cited evidently for its description mainly in column 4 at lines 30-67, column 5 at lines 19-27 and Column 6 at lines 19-50. Chen's polishing layer, however, is of a different structure from the polishing layer according to this invention. In order to make this distinction clearer, claim 16 has been amended to more clearly say that it is the layer as a whole (not just one of its components) that has a hardness in the range of 20-80 duro, having pores with sizes in the range of 20-100 microns. The Examiner is requested to note that the specification describes the layer as "a layer of sponge-like material 52" (page 4, line 12), the sponge-like material being more specifically described in the following few lines. In other words, the layer is not being described as being a layer "including" such a sponge-like material, but the layer is itself a layer of such a sponge-like material. Hence this amendment is only for the purpose of making the description more clearly and correctly understandable, and no new matter is hereby introduced. The amendment is therefore believed enterable.

Explained more in detail, Chen's polishing layer comprises a polymer matrix and a fiber material that fills the matrix, as explained in column 3 at lines 36-38 and column 5 at lines 39-44. For producing the pad, the molded pad is said to be buffed such that a certain thickness of the fiber mat will be exposed (column 5 at lines 45-49). When the pad is used, it is said to be the "fibrous polishing surface" that is effective (column 5 at lines 61-64 and column 6 at lines 1-3). In other words, what is effective in Chen is the "fiber mat".

According to the present invention, by contrast, there is no such fiber in the polishing layer. The polishing layer as a whole (not any matrix in which polymer material is embedded) has the described hardness and porosity to accomplish the stated purpose (of polishing optical fiber connectors). It is therefore to be concluded that Chen does not disclose any layer satisfying the limiting conditions of claim 16 herein.

Tsujimura was evidently cited merely for disclosing an adhesive tape used for securing a polishing pad. It itself does not disclose the kind of polishing layer as described in claim 16 herein. Thus, Chen's material, even if supported by an adhesive tape of Tsujimura cannot result in any product satisfying all of the limiting conditions of claim 16 herein. In other words, Chen and Tsujimura, even if considered in combination, cannot predicate the Examiner's rejection.

Claim 17 is a dependent claim and inherits all of the limitations found in claim 16. Since 16 is evidently allowable in spite of the cited two references, the conclusion is inevitable that claim 17 is also allowable as far as these two cited references are concerned.

It is therefore believed that the instant Amendment is completely responsive to the Office Action and hence that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Specification:

Paragraph starting at line 4 of page 1 has been amended as follows:

This invention relates to a ~~method of~~ polishing pad for polishing optical fiber connectors ~~and a device which is used in such a method~~. More particularly, this invention relates to a polishing pad to be used in a method as a part of a production process for connectors each with a plurality of optical fibers protruding from a front surface of a main body ~~and a pad which is used in such a polishing process~~ such that the variations in the length of protrusion can be reduced and the protruding optical fibers will each have a flatter front surface.

Paragraph starting at line 22 of page 1 has been amended as follows:

It is therefore an object of this invention to provide a ~~new method of~~ polishing pad for polishing optical fiber connectors with a plurality of optical fibers therethrough such that the optical fibers protrude from the front surface of a main body by an improved length of 1-3 microns and preferably longer with reduced variations and have flatter, smoother and more even front surfaces than was possible ~~with prior art methods~~ by using a prior art polishing pad.